

Draft Southeast PTO Meeting

October 4, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:12 p.m.

Attending: Julie Brown, Margherita Balsamo, Andrea Lennon, Michael Kelly, Suzanne Kelly, Esther Soffer Roberts, Jessica Higham, Norma Fisher-Doiron, Mark LaPlaca, Gregory Haddad, Marcel Fuciman, Kimberly Clark, Anurag Tihaiya, Silvia Dorado

School Building Project Update

Mark LaPlaca – Chair of the Board of Education, Greg Haddad – Deputy Manager of Mansfield

Mark began by giving a brief history of the school building project. He explained that this project has been going on for 4 ½ years and all of the schools are in need of replacement or repair being that all four elementary schools are over 50 years old. More information on the School Building Project is available on the town of Mansfield website (<http://www.mansfieldct.gov>). It was explained to the PTO that due to the number of students Mansfield has at an elementary school level that the town would be reimbursed the 90 million it would take to update and repair the current 4 schools. This caused the town to look at several other options. The School Building Committee chose the option to build one elementary school on the Southeast School property and remove the three current Mansfield elementary schools. During meetings held after a suggestion was made to investigate the cost to build two new elementary schools and remove the current schools (Option E). After the investigation the Board of Education came back to the School Building Committee with the recommendation to choose option E. Greg Haddad explained that the Town Council is now looking at the two recommendations (Option D and Option E). Greg stated that the Town Council is having workshops on the options to assist on the decision making. Greg suggested that parents go to the council meetings and make comments/suggestions. The Town Council has asked for an investigation on an option of having the schools continue on for the next 1 to 5 years without any updates and only performing regular maintenance. This option is being looked at due to the current economic conditions. The Town Council has until the end of June 2011 to make their decision.

Question: **Jess Higham** – stated that many of the questions related to the schools should have already been answered by now and is wondering why the council needs more time.

Answer: **Greg Haddad** – mentioned that the town council is more of a political group than the Board of Education and is looking at this from many different angles. He explained that the workshops have taken time and more recently working on this year's budget might have distracted some from this project. He also mentioned again that the decision doesn't have to be made by November.

Mark LaPlaca – Due to this project being an excess of 100,000 dollars they must have at least 15% of registered voters to pass the referendum. Mark does believe this could be a concern if they don't have the referendum on this November's election ballot. Mark then mentioned that UConn students do count if they are registered in Mansfield and this too could make getting 15% of the voters more difficult.

Greg Haddad – Doesn't believe that getting 15% of the registered voters will be an issue no matter if the referendum is not on the November election ballot. Greg stated that 75% of Mansfield's budget is spent on schools and the council knows how important this decision is.

Julie Brown – Many Mansfield citizens were opposed to one school which is what led to adding an option with 2 schools. She also explained that the two school option wasn't available to the building committee when they originally chose to build one school. Julie mentioned that it would be helpful for Mansfield citizens to write letters to the town council and to newspaper editors.

Mark LaPlaca – told the PTO that the locations for the schools have not been decided but it seems the best options are to build one school on the Southeast Property and the other school on the Vinton Property. The Goodwin School has many rental properties next to the school and there doesn't seem to be the area needed to build a school. The town could purchase land to build these new schools but that would cost the town additional money and would leave town owned vacant sites. Mark also mentioned that another risk of waiting is if the economy improves the cost of construction could go up.

Mark LaPlaca – said that with the track and field referendum passing recently they have learned the importance of educating the public and it also gives him hope that the school building referendum will pass.

Greg Haddad – stated that he too feels more positive after the Track and Field referendum and mentioned that some of the local newspapers are inaccurately reporting the option for the school building project. For example, The Chronicle has mentioned that option E is the most expensive option when the truth is that both option E and D are the LEAST expensive of all the options.

New Items

Jess Higham – mentioned that both Wendy's and G&L Christmas Barn would like to do a Southeast event if we are interested. Jess gave the information to Andrea Lennon to look into later.

Esther Soffer Roberts – mentioned that the bulb fundraiser made 235.00 dollars.

Principal's Report

Norma Fisher-Doiron – Made a request for Joan Carr to ask the PTO for funds to a Martin Luther King Jr. tribute. Norma mentioned this would be part of the enrichment program for 3rd and 4th grade. Andrea Lennon motioned to accept the amount of 697.50 and Kimberly Clark second the motion

Norma Fisher-Doiron – Mentioned that there have been 2 new students in Kindergarten, 2 new students in 1st grade and 1 new student in 4th grade. Norma said that there are a total 269 students at Southeast School. Norma explained that there can be a max of 45 students in two classrooms within a grade level before looking at additional teaching staff and currently all grades are below this.

President's Report

Julie Brown – Stated that the Ice Cream Social is this Friday October 8th and they are still looking for volunteers. Julie mentioned they were still looking for a volunteer to take the science sampler and Suzanne Kelly volunteered to run the Science Sampler.

Jess Higham -Auction is still looking for volunteers for Saturday October 16th. Jess was also looking for more people to join her for a basket party where they will put the classroom baskets together. Jess is looking for volunteers to greet people at the door and for volunteers to help pick up some of the auction items.

Julie Brown – Requested a list of all the volunteers Jess Higham needs for the auction.

Jess Higham – Mentioned that there will be a camera person at the event taking photos for people. She also brought up that she needs people to help put together the auction boards.

Julie Brown – remembered that the PTO was going to discuss the request to purchase Smartboards for the art room and music room. It was decided to discuss this at the next PTO meeting in November.

The question was asked of Norma Fisher-Doiron if the staff was looking into any grant to help purchase the Smartboards. Norma believed that the staff has already applied for a grant.

Andrea Lennon – Asked Norma if they could open the whole gym for the Ice Cream Social this time. Norma said that this should be okay.

Jess Higham – Mentioned that the sign for the auction is up and in front of the school.

Vice President's Report

Andrea Lennon – Told the PTO if there are any updates that need to be made to the website they need to be sent Mr. Hendricks.

Andrea Lennon – Mentioned that TV turn off week in the last week in April and this mean that the school dance should be on April 30th.

Jess Higham – Asked if she could just send an invitation to all the staff at Southeast for themselves and one guest for the auction. The PTO agreed to sending invitations to all staff.

Andrea Lennon – Told the PTO that she looked into the First-Aid Kit fundraiser and 50% of the sales would go to the PTO after paying taxes and shipping. The company said that if the orders were received by homeroom, they would box them that way. If the PTO orders the First-Aid Kits at the same time as the Hockey League they would receive an additional 10%. The PTO would like to order with the Hockey League as long as they are able to actually have the fundraiser after the New Year. Andrea will look to see if this is possible.

Andrea Lennon – Said she has received many questions on why the PTO doesn't do a fundraiser with T-shirts. The PTO thought it would be a good idea to look into one.

Treasurer's Report

Kimberly Clark – Informed the PTO that the Fall Carnival made half the money that it made the year prior.

Jess Higham – Suggested that the PTO includes a raffle and the classroom baskets for next year.

Kimberly Clark – Requested to remove the bake sale from the budget. This brought up discussion on having a bake sale at the auction and having a bake sale at the election this November.

Kimberly Clark – Mentioned that 22 of the 24 Frisbees have been sold.

Kimberly Clark – Is looking for someone to take over the script gift card fundraiser

Kimberly Clark nominated to accept the treasurer's report, Julie Brown seconded.

Suzanne Kelly nominated to accept the secretary's report, Kimberly seconded.

PTO meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm

Respectfully submitted by Mike Kelly

Next meeting: Monday, Nov. 1